

Message Text

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TAGS: TGEN,TECH,TPHY
SUBJECT: US-USSR S&T AGREEMENT: CHEMICAL CATALYSIS
(01.02); VISIT OF US SPECIALIST ROBERT WEBER

1. US POST GRADUATE STUDENT ROBERT WEBER RECENTLY COMPLETED ALMOST TWO MONTH VISIT TO USSR UNDER THE CHEMICAL CATALYSIS (01.02) PROGRAM OF THE US-USSR S&T AGREEMENT. WEBER SPENT MOST OF HIS VISIT AT THE INSTITUTE FOR ORGANIC CHEMISTRY IN MOSCOW, WORKING WITH SOVIET RESEARCHERS IN CALCULATING ELECTRONIC PROPERTIES OF SMALL TRANSITION METAL CLUSTERS. WEBER SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS AT SAME INSTITUTE DURING THE SUMMER OF 1977 ADAPTING A US COMPUTER PROGRAM BASED ON IBM 360 FOR USE ON SOVIET ES 1022 COMPUTER. ADAPTATION THEN TOOK LONGER THAN EXPECTED AND WEBER RETURNED THIS YEAR TO CARRY OUT ACTUAL COMPUTER EXPERIMENTS USING THE MODEL. WEBER NOTED THAT SOVIETS LACK EXPERIENCE AND COMPUTER CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT LARGE SCALE COMPUTER EXPERIMENTS ON LEVEL OF US PRACTICE. HOWEVER, WEBER ALSO NOTED THAT SOVIETS ARE EXCELLENT THEORETISTS IN FIELD OF CHEMICAL CATALYSIS AND WEBER BELIEVES HE BENEFITED FROM CONTACTS WITH SOVIET SPECIALISTS IN THIS AREA.

2. WEBER ESTABLISHED GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIS SOVIET COLLEAGUES, HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT THE
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RELATIVELY JUNIOR SOVIETS WITH WHOM HE WORKED DIRECTLY WERE UNDER CONSTRAINTS NOT TO FRATERNIZE TOO CLOSELY WITH HIM AFTER HOURS. AFTER SOME TIME THEY EVENTUALLY AGREED TO MEET HIM FOR DINNER AT RESTAURANTS OR TO VISIT HIS ROOM AT THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES HOTEL. SOVIET COLLEAGUES EXPLAINED HOWEVER THAT VISITS TO THEIR HOMES WERE IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE THEY WERE "UNDER REPAIR."

WEBER STATED THAT CURRENT COOLNESS IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS DID NOT APPEAR TO AFFECT ATMOSPHERE OR SUBSTANCE OF HIS WORK. WEBER COMMENTED THAT HIS SOVIET COLLEAGUES WERE BRIGHT AND HARD-WORKING; HOWEVER, HE ALSO NOTED THAT THEY APPEARED TO LACK INITIATIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, SOVIETS APPEARED UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO RECOGNIZE ERRORS IN THE COMPUTER PROGRAM TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION, EVEN WHEN IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE DATA OBTAINED THAT THE COMPUTER WAS PRODUCING GARBLED RESULTS AND SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH THE PROGRAM.

3. WEBER WAS ONLY ADMITTED TO AN ACTUAL COMPUTER ROOM THREE WEEKS AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. SOVIETS STATED THAT DELAY WAS CAUSED BECAUSE WEBER'S ORIGINAL APPLICATION HAD NOT SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED ACCESS TO A COMPUTER ROOM -- ALTHOUGH APPLICATION STATED THAT PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WAS TO DO JOINT WORK ON A COMPUTER PROGRAM. ACTUAL COMPUTER WORK WAS DONE ON ES 1020 AND ES 1022 AT THE INSTITUTE OF STEEL AND ALLOYS AND INSTITUTE FOR THE FOREST INDUSTRY, BECAUSE THE BESM 6 COMPUTER AT THE INSTITUTE OF ORGANIC CHEMISTRY REPORTEDLY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH COMPUTING CAPACITY TO HANDLE THE PROGRAM. ADDITIONAL CALCULATIONS WERE ALSO DONE BY WEBER'S SOVIET COLLEAGUES AT ANOTHER COMPUTER CENTER WHICH WEBER WAS NOT ALLOWED TO VISIT AND WHICH HIS SOVIET COLLEAGUES REFUSED TO IDENTIFY. WEBER NOTED THAT THE COMPUTER

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CENTER HE WORKED IN SUPERFICIALLY RESEMBLED WESTERN CENTERS IN THAT THEY HAD RAISED FLOORS, AIR CONDITIONING AND TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY CONTROLS. HOWEVER, WEBER COMMENTED THAT THE AIR CONDITIONING WAS NOT USED AND THAT NO ONE SEEMED TO PAY ANY ATTENTION TO MONITORING THE TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY CONTROLS TO KEEP THEM CONSTANT. IN ADDITION, THERE WAS NO EFFORT TO PROTECT THE EQUIPMENT FROM THE SHOCK AND DUST OF LARGE SCALE CONSTRUCTION WHICH WAS GOING ON IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF ONE OF THE COMPUTER CENTERS WHERE HE WORKED.

4. ALTHOUGH WEBER DESCRIBED THE 1020 AND THE 1022 AS CARBON COPIES OF THE IBM 360, HE NOTED THAT THEY HAD A SMALLER COMPUTING CAPACITY AND DID NOT WORK AS WELL AS THE WESTERN MODEL. THE COMPUTERS REGULARLY BROKE DOWN AND REPAIRS OFTEN TOOK EXCESSIVELY LONG. IN ADDITION, THERE WAS NO EFFORT TO PROTECT THE COMPUTERS FROM WIDE VOLTAGE FLUCTUATIONS IN THE CITY POWER SUPPLY. FOR EXAMPLE, WEBER NOTED THAT AT 6 AM EVERY MORNING WORK ON THE COMPUTERS HAD TO STOP BECAUSE THE CITY TRAM SERVICE BEGAN OPERATIONS AT THAT TIME, CAUSING A MOMENTARY DRAIN ON THE POWER SUPPLY AND LEADING THE

COMPUTER TO GIVE ERRATIC RESULTS. TOON

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